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BIOGRAPHIES OF PERSONS IN CHARGE OF FEDERAL AGRICULTURAL WORK, 1836 TO DATE

(Commissioners of Patents, Superintendents of Agriculture,  
Commissioners of Agriculture, and Secretaries of Agriculture)

Commissioners of Patents

Federal aid to American agriculture began in the Patent Office, then in the Department of State, while Henry L. Ellsworth (1791-1858) was Commissioner of Patents. Ellsworth served from July 4, 1836, when the present patent law went into effect, until May 4, 1845. Actual financial aid to agriculture, for the first time in our history, was provided in 1839, the Patent Office being authorized to expend \$1,000 for the collection and dissemination of agricultural seed, plants, and statistics.

Ellsworth was a son of the third Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Oliver Ellsworth. He was born in Connecticut where he later practiced law and farmed. He became a leader of the Hartford County Agricultural Society. He was elected Mayor of Hartford, which position he resigned June 15, 1835, to become head of the Patent Office by President Jackson's appointment. When the new patent law went into effect the next year, he became our first Commissioner of Patents thereunder.

At the time of his appointment Ellsworth was president of the Aetna Insurance Company, was active and successful both in business and in civic affairs, and had worked zealously for agricultural progress. After he became Commissioner of Patents he gratuitously distributed plants and seeds transmitted to him. This he did at his own expense and without Congressional authorization. Meanwhile he agitated for Federal aid to the farmer.

On January 21, 1839, the Hon. Isaac Fletcher of Vermont, then Chairman of the House Committee on Patents, provided Ellsworth with an opportunity to transmit to him complete information regarding the agricultural activities of the Patent Office. Ellsworth presented this information so impressively that an Agricultural Division was created in the Office and thereafter such service was rendered farmers as the small funds provided would permit.



When he resigned, Ellsworth went to live on farm land he owned near Lafayette, Ind. He became Land Commissioner of the United States and remained in Indiana until a few months before his death on December 27, 1858, when ill-health caused him to return to Fair Haven, Conn. He bequeathed his huge residuary estate in western land to Yale University.

Edmund Burke (1809-1882) thereupon became Commissioner of Patents and served from May 5, 1845, until May 8, 1849. He was born in Vermont and had practiced law and edited the Argus in New Hampshire for some years. From 1839 until 1845 he was a member of Congress. Patent Office agricultural work continued under him. During Burke's term Congress appropriated a thousand dollars to be used for the institution of a system of analyses of the different grains produced in this country and of flour manufactured here for export. Prof. Lewis C. Beck of New Brunswick, N.J., made the analyses required.

In 1849, however, the Department of the Interior was created and the Patent Office became part of it. In December of that year President Taylor recommended the establishment of a Bureau of Agriculture in this new Department. He declared that current Government assistance to agriculture was wholly inadequate. Congress took no action.

Thomas Ewbank (1792-1870), of New York, became Commissioner of Patents on May 9, 1849, serving until October 31, 1852. He was appointed by President Taylor. Ewbank was born in Durham, England. He began life as an apprentice in the sheet-metal trade. He came to this country in 1819, and was successful thereafter as an inventor, manufacturer, and author. His primary interest was in industrial applications of chemistry and physics. Between 1845 and 1848 he traveled extensively in South America. In 1849 his grandfather, Thomas Ewing became the first Secretary of the Interior Department, and the Patent Office was placed therein.

Possibly because his own primary interest was not agriculture, Ewbank directed that a "practical and scientific agriculturist" be appointed to attend agricultural matters in the Patent Office and to prepare a separate annual agricultural report. Daniel Lee, M.D., formerly editor of the Genesee Farmer, was employed. He apparently was not notably successful though he maintained office until 1853. His main passion was for the conservation of soil nutrients. Ewbank omitted agricultural statistics from the annual report, saying that those hitherto published were unreliable.

Silas H. Hodges (1804-1875), of Vermont, was Acting Commissioner of Patents from November 1, 1852, until March 23, 1853. He had been a Vermont lawyer who, from 1845 to 1850, was Auditor of Accounts of that State. He served but briefly having been appointed by President Fillmore. Rather oddly, Hodges was later Examiner-in-Chief of the Patent Office, from 1861 until 1875, when he died in Washington, D. C. R. C. Weightman acted as Commissioner from March 25 until May 15, 1853.

On May 16, 1853, Charles Mason (1804-1882) of Iowa, born in New York, was appointed Commissioner of Patents by President Fillmore. He held office until August 4, 1857. Mason made Daniel J. Browne editor of the agriculture reports, after some critics had rather sharply condemned Daniel Lee's efforts.



Charles Mason had attended West Point as a classmate of Robert E. Lee, but he resigned from the Army in 1831, and turned to law and journalism. For a year or so he was acting editor of the New York Evening Post. He subsequently became Chief Justice of Iowa Territory and president of two railroads. After his retirement as Commissioner he settled in Washington, D.C., as a patent lawyer, but later he again entered Iowa politics. As Commissioner he employed English-born Townend Glover as entomologist; also a chemist and a botanist.

Joseph Holt (1807-1894), a Kentucky lawyer, became Commissioner of Patents September 9, 1857, and served until May 6, 1859, Samuel T. Shugert having acted in the interval between August 4 and September 9. President Buchanan made the appointment because of Holt's great aid in bringing about a party victory. In 1859, Holt became Postmaster General of the United States and, soon after, Secretary of War. Lincoln later appointed him Judge Advocate General of the Army, and he had much to do with the development and codification of our military law and the supervision of court martial procedure.

William D. Bishop (1827-1904), of Connecticut, born in New Jersey, was appointed Commissioner of Patents by President Buchanan May 7, 1859, and served until February 14, 1860. He had been a railroad president and a member of Congress. He returned to railroading and politics on his resignation. Bishop suggested that free distribution of domestic seed be discontinued.

Philip F. Thomas (1810-1890) followed Bishop in office the next day and resigned December 13, 1860. He was a Maryland lawyer who had also been a member of Congress. He declined appointment as Secretary of the Navy in the Cabinet of President Pierce but became Collector of Customs at Baltimore. He resigned as Commissioner of Patents to become Secretary of the Treasury in President Buchanan's Cabinet. In later life he returned to Congress.

The agricultural report issued in 1860 was signed by Thomas G. Clemson as Superintendent of the Agricultural Division. From December 14, 1860, until March 28, 1861, S. T. Shugert again acted as Commissioner of Patents. By this time the Agricultural Division had an appropriation of \$53,000 for the year and it employed a superintendent, four clerks, a curator or gardener, and some aides for the last. This was quite a step forward from the head of the Division and a single clerk in 1842.

David P. Holloway (1809-1883), of Indiana, born in Ohio, became Commissioner of Patents March 28, 1861. He served until August 16, 1865. He was primarily a journalist interested in agriculture and was for many years associated with a Whig journal, the Palladium, published in Richmond, Ind. He had been a member of both houses of the Indiana State legislature and then a member of the national House of Representatives from Indiana.

Here he became chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture. As such he introduced a bill to establish a department of agriculture. He made very effective pleas for increased Federal aid to agriculture in his annual reports and otherwise and, while he was Commissioner, the Agricultural Division became the Department of Agriculture by Act of Congress, signed by President Lincoln, May 15, 1862.

Superintendents of the Agricultural Division

Thomas G. Clemson served as Superintendent of the Agricultural Division of the Patent Office from February 3, 1860, until March 4, 1861. He was succeeded, in April 1861, by Isaac Newton of Pennsylvania, born in New Jersey, who served until he became the first Commissioner of Agriculture and head of the new Department of Agriculture, July 1, 1862. A few facts will be given here about Browne and Clemson. Newton is treated under Commissioners of Agriculture and little information is extant about Daniel Lee.

Daniel Jay Browne was a New Hampshire-born agricultural and scientific writer, bred as a practical farmer. He took courses at Harvard and, at 26, founded a journal, the Naturalist. For some years he occupied his time with foreign travel and, on his return, was variously employed in pursuits concerned with the promotion of agriculture. In 1852, he became agricultural statistician for the Census Bureau and, in 1853, the agricultural clerk in the Patent Office, where he wrote and edited agricultural reports until his resignation, in 1859.

Browne was sent to Europe in 1855 to collect agricultural information, plants, and seeds. This made him our first officially accredited agricultural explorer. His activities aroused much adverse criticism, largely on the part of those who opposed free seed distribution or Federal aid to agriculture, and a Congressional investigation followed. Browne was exonerated. Nevertheless criticism continued, mainly by seedsmen outside Government, so he resigned.

Thomas Green Clemson was the founder of Clemson College. He was born in Philadelphia. He became a mining engineer after studying chemistry in France with Du Long, Robinquet, and Gay-Lussac. He worked as a consulting engineer 1832-39, married John C. Calhoun's daughter in 1838, and settled down to southern plantation life. He left it in 1844 to become President Tyler's Charge d'Affaires in Belgium where he remained until 1851.

From 1853 until 1861 Clemson lived in Bladensburg, Md., and was instrumental in founding the Maryland Agricultural College, in 1856. In 1859, the Secretary of the Interior appointed him Superintendent of the Agricultural Division. He thereafter strongly urged the establishment of a Federal bureau of agriculture and of land-grant colleges. He resigned March 4, 1861, because of his southern sympathies, and entered the service of the Confederate Government. His later life was spent in South Carolina. He was a big fellow, 6 feet 6 inches tall, a member of many learned societies, an amateur violinist and artist, and an art collector. He left his fortune to found Clemson College.



Commissioners of Agriculture

Isaac Newton (1800-1867) was born in New Jersey, of Quaker stock, but grew up in Pennsylvania. He had limited formal education yet, as his annual reports show, he wrote a somewhat pompously erudite style. Around 1840 he came into the management of two farms owned by Paul Hubbs, a sea captain, in Delaware County, Pa. He remained on the farms after Hubbs and his two sons were lost at sea during a final voyage Hubbs decided to make on his ship after retiring as captain. Newton installed an elaborate underground drainage system on the farms, built good fences, barns, and toolhouses; had eight hired men and two dairy maids, the latter imported especially from Wales, excellent dairy cattle, and a few fine sheep.

His management of the farms was eminently successful and made him widely known in agricultural circles. A surplus of milk and cream induced him to start a confectionery shop on Chestnut Street in Philadelphia. He also made fine print table butter and each week he sent a little box of it to the White House, before Lincoln's term. A prize calf Newton sent to President-elect Fillmore was boxed and exhibited by the latter in the Capital building. He became a local leader and politician.

In 1855, Newton, against his wife's better judgment, bought a thousand-acre farm in Prince William County, Va. As his wife refused to move there, he operated it by remote control through his half-brother, Samuel Garwood. All went well until malaria and the Civil War combined to make the venture a failure, and Newton found himself broke and jobless. Thereupon his political friends urged him to go to Washington, meet the right people, and get a Government job. This he did. He met and made a lifelong friend of President Lincoln. In early 1861, Commissioner of Patents Holloway put him in charge of the Agricultural Division at \$3,000 a year, and he came to live on C Street, between 3rd and 4th, N.W., in Washington.

Here Newton became an even closer friend of Lincoln. When, during the war, Lincoln's life was thought to be threatened by poisoned food, Newton was detailed to the White House to watch the food supply there. There he also became a confidant of Mrs. Lincoln and helped her out of a number of embarrassing situations which usually revolved around department store bills too large for her to manage. Newton would sometimes pay them and let Mrs. Lincoln repay him in installments; at other times he interceded with the President in her behalf.

It was Newton who selected the present grounds of the Department of Agriculture, a 40-acre tract used during his incumbency as an experimental farm. In July 1866, he sat in his room at the Patent Office Building and heard an approaching thunderstorm. He remembered samples of a number of wheat varieties which had been cut and <sup>should be</sup> saved from injury by rain. So he grabbed his high silk hat, hurried a mile over to the experimental grounds, bustled around helping to put the samples away, and Washington's July son performed traditionally. Newton suffered a sunstroke from which he never fully recovered. He died on July 9, 1867, as a result of this experience. Shortly after his death the old Red Brick Building he had seen erected was ready for occupancy.



It is difficult to assay Newton at this late date. He had loyal friends and venomous enemies. Some extolled his learning and his wisdom; others insisted he was all but illiterate and so incompetent that he could not satisfactorily perform his duties. Farm journals in general paid little attention to the Department and newspapers practically none, but Newton was often attacked in print and speech. But Lincoln stolidly disregarded adverse criticism of his friend Newton, though Newton actually was to have been dismissed by President Johnson for incompetence. Newton's illness intervened to save him.

Newton's primary aim was to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before, an expression he quoted from Dean Swift in his first annual report. He appointed a botanist, an entomologist, a chemist, and a statistician. He sought to carry out the aims of the organic act founding the Department, and that law was as broad in scope as all outdoors. He sought to collect, arrange, and publish valuable agricultural information; to collect and introduce valuable seeds, plants, and animals; to promote chemistry, botany, and entomology; and to establish a Library and a Museum. By 1868, the Department of Agriculture had a building of its own, the old Red Brick Building. It cost \$140,420, including furniture, heating plant, and equipment. The Department had fewer than 50 employees in January of that year.

Horace Capron (1804-1885) was appointed Commissioner by President Johnson, and served from December 5, 1867, until July 31, 1871. Chief Clerk John W. Stokes had been Acting Commissioner of Agriculture from June 20, 1866, until December 4, 1867. Capron was born in Massachusetts but grew up in New York. He intended to prepare himself for West Point, but plans fell through, and ultimately he drifted into the cotton-manufacturing business in Maryland. By 1836, he had erected a model cotton mill in Laurel, Md., of which he became superintendent.

While here Capron acquired the Snowden estate by marriage and engaged in scientific farming so successfully that he is said to have cleared \$36,000 in one year. After his wife's death, in 1849, he left Laurel, assumed various occupations, including that of cattle breeder, and finally entered the Army which he left brevet brigadier general. Upon his resignation as Commissioner, Capron became agricultural adviser to the Japanese government, for which he revolutionized farming in Hokkaido. He returned in 1875, and lived in Washington until his death.

Frederick Watts (1801-1889) was appointed by President Grant to succeed Capron and took office August 1, 1871, serving until June 30, 1877. Watts was born in Pennsylvania of Welsh extraction. After his father's death he grew up on his uncle's farm, acquiring a taste for and a lasting interest in farming. He studied law and was also President of the Cumberland Valley Railroad Company from 1845 until 1871. In 1849 he was appointed judge of the 9th Judicial District and served until 1852.

But all the time he engaged in scientific farming and he was also instrumental in the introduction of McCormick's reaper. Watts experimented with farm buildings of various kinds and organized farm societies. He was 70 when appointed head of the Department. He was the first head of the Department to give attention to our timber supply. After retirement he returned to Carlisle, Pa., where he later died.



William G. Le Duc (1823-1917) was appointed Commissioner of Agriculture by President Hayes on July 1, 1877; he served until June 30, 1881. Le Duc was born in Ohio, his father having been a Frenchman who came to this country to help the colonists in the Revolutionary War. Le Duc studied law, was admitted to the bar, and later became very active in and around St. Paul. He not only helped develop the farm country but was engaged in civic affairs and in laying out west St. Paul. He ultimately sold his holdings and left.

Le Duc served in the Union Army, rising from captain to lieutenant colonel. He had distinct inventive genius and helped develop the Remington typewriter. At one period of his life he engaged in railroading. As Commissioner of Agriculture he established a tea farm, and promoted the growing of sugar beets, sorghum, and other economic plants. He also initiated the fight on animal diseases, this interest later culminating in the establishment of the Bureau of Animal Industry in 1884.

George B. Loring, M.D. (1817-91), physician, agriculturist, and politician, was appointed Commissioner of Agriculture by President Garfield. He took office July 1, 1881, and served until April 3, 1885. He was born in Massachusetts and graduated from Harvard in the same class with James Russell Lowell. He then took an M. D. at Harvard, and entered medical practice.

Soon he joined the staff of the Marine Hospital at Chelsea, Mass., and 7 years later was appointed commissioner to revise the entire United States marine hospital system. But he left this work in 1850, and thereafter devoted himself to agriculture and politics. He developed Loring Manor, a model stock farm. He also became a political leader and orator, his orations have been somewhat overdecorated like the interiors of Victorian homes. Loring progressed by never championing unpopular causes.

He served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, as President of the State Senate, and as a representative in Congress. His appointment as Commissioner of Agriculture followed his defeat for re-election in 1880. He made an excellent Commissioner and was long prominent in agricultural circles. He was a friend of Emerson, a member of many agricultural societies, and a patron of Massachusetts Agricultural College. Harrison made him Minister to Portugal 1889-90. He wrote extensively on agriculture.

#### Last Commissioner - First Secretary

Norman J. Colman (1827-1911) was the last Commissioner and also the first Secretary of Agriculture. He was appointed by President Cleveland and took office April 4, 1885, serving as Commissioner until February 12, 1889. Colman was born in New York, taught school at Louisville, Ky., after graduation from a New York academy, and then took a degree in law at the University of Louisville. He practiced in Indiana and was a lieutenant colonel in the 85th Missouri Militia during the Civil War. In 1865, he founded Colman's Rural World in St. Louis, Mo.

He was elected to the Missouri legislature and became greatly interested in the politics of that State and in the State university. He belonged to numerous agricultural organizations. He was appointed Commissioner of Agriculture because of his broad knowledge of agricultural problems and was about the most competent head of the Department to date. Work on public roads started during his term. He considerably expanded other Department activities and greatly augmented the number of women employees.

Colman was largely instrumental in effecting the passage of the Hatch (experiment station) Act and also of the law which raised the status of the head of the Department to Cabinet rank. This act was passed in 1889 and Colman thus automatically became Secretary of Agriculture from February 13 until March 6 that year. He left office with Cleveland.

### Secretaries of Agriculture

Jeremiah M. Rusk (1830-1893) was appointed Secretary of Agriculture by the incoming President Harrison. He served from March 7, 1889 until March 6, 1893. Rusk was born in Ohio. His education was meager. He moved to Wisconsin, in 1853, and set himself up as a tavern keeper. He was successful and soon owned a stage line and considerable farm land. He was always a good businessman.

Next he became quite as successful as a politician. He was in the 25th Wisconsin Infantry during the Civil War, rose to lieutenant colonel, and was brevetted brigadier general on retirement. He was elected to Congress, and then became Governor of Wisconsin and proved a good one. He was mentioned for President in 1888.

President Harrison said that as Secretary of Agriculture, "He not only filled the measure of the man I wanted but enlarged it." His administration was marked by the eradication of the destructive cattle disease, contagious pleuropneumonia, the passage of meat-inspection legislation, and his recognition of the importance of publicity, along with his ability to engage the interest of the press in Department activities. He first issued press releases and farmers' bulletins.

Rusk weeded out many employees and filled the places with his Army colleagues, many of whom are said to have been senilely deficient. The old soldiers thus literally took over the Department. But Rusk was a devoted agriculturalist, got increased appropriations for the Department, and placed its work on broader lines than hitherto.

After his retirement from office Rusk returned to his farm where he died 8 months later. He was a large man, 6 feet 3 in height, well and broadly informed, dependable, logical, active, and straightforward. He reorganized the Department, placing the scientific work under an Assistant Secretary provided by Congress. Rusk also began a systematic investigation of foreign markets for American farm products.



J. Sterling Morton (1832-1902) was appointed Secretary of Agriculture by President Cleveland on his return to office. He assumed the post March 7, 1893 and served until March 5, 1897. He was a man of strong and independent views. Born in New York, he went to Monroe, Mich., to settle, then to Detroit, where he rapidly became popular and well-known. He attended the University of Michigan but was expelled in his senior year for his independent thinking.

Later Union College of New York gave Morton an A. B. degree, sans residence, and ultimately the University of Michigan did the same. Morton married and went to Nebraska, becoming the editor of the Nebraska City News, and was soon involved in politics. Meanwhile he owned, lived on, and worked a Nebraska quarter-section. Morton also had a passion for tree planting and was the father of Arbor Day.

President Buchanan made Morton Secretary of Nebraska Territory in 1858. He became more and more active in politics and his appointment as Secretary of Agriculture culminated his career. Morton was an excellent writer on agricultural subjects and was regarded as a foremost citizen of Nebraska.

As Secretary he strongly emphasized economy, openly fought the free distribution of seeds by the Department, established the Division of Publications, reorganized the Division of Statistics, and created the Division of Agrostology to study forage plants. During Morton's term also the Division of Soils was set up in the Weather Bureau and the Division of Microscopy was abolished, its work being scattered elsewhere. The Office of Road Inquiry was set up and a Dairy Division was organized in the Bureau of Animal Industry, July 1, 1895.

Morton entered the Department wholly prejudiced against government service, which he regarded as wasteful. He cleared out the old soldiers, demoted all the women, with four competent exceptions who were still paid above his maximum of \$1,200 a year for women employees, and sought to cut expenses to the bone. He refused to recommend appropriations for free seed distribution, but Congress inserted the item and then passed legislation compelling him to send out the seeds.

Morton insisted that farmers get fully comprehensible information from the Department, which he regarded as more important than the promiscuous distribution of seeds to many nonfarmers. He is said to have saved two million dollars during his administration which he wanted used to provide new buildings, but Congress demurred.

When McKinley became President it proved difficult to select a Secretary of Agriculture who would be approved by all political factions. McKinley asked the advice of "Uncle Henry" Wallace, father of Henry C. and grandfather of Henry A. As a result James ("Tama" Jim) Wilson (1836-1920), of Iowa, became Secretary of Agriculture March 6, 1897. He served the phenomenal period of 16 years, right through the McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and Taft administrations. He retired March 5, 1913. To date this is the longest term served by any Cabinet member.

Wilson was born in Ayrshire, Scotland. He came to this country in 1851, and chose farming as his life work. Settling first in Connecticut, he moved on to Tama County, Iowa. He attended Iowa (now Grinnell) College and, after graduation, became a local leader. He was elected to the Iowa legislature and then to Congress. He was a member of the State Railroad Commission in Iowa and of the House Committee on Agriculture when he got to Washington.



He proved to be an expert parliamentarian and served three terms in the House. He began to be called "Tama Jim" to distinguish him from Senator James Falconer Wilson of Iowa. When he left Congress he wrote on agriculture for the Iowa Homestead and, in 1891, he was appointed professor of agriculture in Iowa State College and head of the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station. He placed the State's agricultural institutions on a firm scientific basis.

As Secretary of Agriculture, Wilson was outstanding for building the Department up scientifically and for the creation of many of its scientific and research bureaus. But farm demonstration and cooperative extension work, as well as investigations in agricultural economics also began while he was Secretary. Wilson was a good organizer and the Department grew into a great research, regulatory, educational, and custodial institution during his term. He delighted to herald ever-advancing agricultural prosperity, but tended to ignore certain insidious factors which menaced this.

His successors had to face these problems. While Wilson held office urban influences on rural life rapidly intensified. Means of transportation and communication vastly improved. The increasing manufacture of automobiles and road improvements gave farmers new access to markets. Competition grew keener and farm credit became an acute problem, while better markets became obligatory. After his retirement Wilson lived in Iowa until his death.

David F. Houston (1866-1940) was appointed Secretary of Agriculture by President Wilson. He served from March 6, 1913 until February 1, 1920, when he resigned to become Secretary of the Treasury. Houston was an outstanding man, versatile, broad in knowledge, and a gifted thinker. He was born in North Carolina. He studied in South Carolina College, then took a degree at Harvard. His primary studies were government and economics. He held many honorary degrees.

Next Houston joined the faculty of South Carolina College. Then he became, in order, superintendent of city schools for Spartansburg, S. C., a professor at Harvard, president of the Agricultural and Mechanical College in Texas (1905-1908), and chancellor of Washington University in St. Louis (1908-1916).

Houston's agricultural thinking was much in advance of his time. He was prevented from putting it into full effect by the outbreak of the first World War. He ushered in a dynamic phase of the Department's history and was the most distinguished man intellectually to head the Department for many years. He was economist, expert in government, philosopher, financier, and agricultural statesman, all in one.

Houston had remarkable prescience. He sensed the fact that the time had already come to plan the agricultural industry on a national basis. He was responsible for such reorganization of the Department as enabled it to cope with economic and social problems and to increase its study of credit and marketing facilities.

Houston served as Secretary of the Treasury for about a year after leaving Agriculture. He was also chairman of the Federal Reserve and the Farm Loan Boards, and held many other important public offices. He became Chairman of the Board of Mutual Life Insurance Co. of New York after he left Government service and he held many additional important business and financial posts.



Edwin T. Meredith (1876-1928) became Secretary of Agriculture the day following Houston's resignation. He served only from February 2, 1920 until President Wilson retired, March 4, 1921. Meredith was born on a farm near Avoca, Iowa, and early became an assistant to his grandfather on the Farmer's Tribune, which journal became his own property as a wedding present. In 1902, he founded Successful Farming.

Year after year he borrowed money to finance his expanded plans for the paper. He managed to persuade his creditors to renew their loans and increase them at the same time. Ultimately his journal proved most successful. Thereafter Meredith loaned much more money than he ever borrowed to country boys trying to get an education or a start in the livestock field.

In 1922, Meredith purchased the Dairy Farmer and also founded Fruit, Garden, and Home which, in 1924, became Better Homes and Gardens. Meredith, who was always a passionate devotee of advertising, promised to make good any loss suffered by his readers if any advertisements in his journals proved fraudulent. After President Wilson appointed him Secretary he himself was much mentioned as a Presidential possibility.

Meredith was, at various times, director of the Chicago Federal Reserve Bank, member of the World War I Excess Profits Board and of a commission sent to Europe to study industrial conditions, president of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, president of the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce, and a director of various business and financial institutions. He was an ardent prohibitionist. He advocated farm relief and aided the 4-H Clubs; he also founded the Department's USDA Clubs.

Henry C. Wallace (1866-1924), son of Uncle Henry Wallace, preacher and agricultural journalist, was appointed Secretary of Agriculture by President Harding. He served from March 5, 1921 until he died in office October 25, 1924. Wallace was born at Rock Island, Ill., and attended Iowa State. He interrupted his education to take over some of his father's tenant farms. He married and settled down to farm. At the same time he began to write for farm papers.

His writings attracted the attention of Dean Henry, Director of the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station, who insisted that he return to Iowa State, which he did, in 1892. Despite family obligations and limited means he graduated and, a few months thereafter, Tana Jin Wilson appointed him assistant professor of agriculture, in charge of dairying. In 1894, Wallace became part owner and publisher of Farm and Dairy, Ames, Iowa. Soon afterward he, his brother John, and his father became its owners and editors, changing the name first to Wallace's Farm and Dairy and later to Wallace's Farmer.

Wallace was long identified with various organizations of farmers and livestock growers. For 16 years he was secretary of the Corn Belt Meat Producers Association. He was the first member of his family to hold political office. His chief interests as Secretary were improved marketing systems, the adjustment of farm production to current consumer needs, conservation, and support of the McNary-Haugen Bill. His funeral was held from the White House.



Howard M. Gore (1877-1947) of West Virginia, became Secretary of Agriculture on Wallace's death, by appointment of President Coolidge. He served from November 22, 1924, until March 4, 1925. He was born on a West Virginia farm and lived on farms until 1913. He attended the University of West Virginia and became a farmer and stock breeder, specializing in beef cattle, dairy cattle, and sheep. He was designated a member of the American Farm Bureau Federation's Committee of Fifteen to consider better methods of marketing livestock.

He became connected with the Packers and Stockyards Administration and for three years before that was president of the West Virginia Hereford Breeders Association. From 1912 until 1916, he was president of the West Virginia Livestock Association. He was made a life member of the International Livestock Exposition. He was Assistant Secretary of Agriculture from September 17, 1923 until November 21, 1924. He became Acting Secretary on Wallace's death.

As Secretary, Gore took a lively interest in clubs for farm boys and girls, in agricultural cooperatives, and in the encouragement of livestock production. He left office to become Governor of West Virginia, serving from 1925 until 1929. He was West Virginia State Commissioner of Agriculture from 1931 to 1933, and of the West Virginia Public Service Commission at the time of his death, in June 20, 1947.

William M. Jardine (1879---) was appointed Secretary of Agriculture by President Coolidge, serving from March 5, 1925 until March 4, 1929. Jardine's father was a Scottish silk weaver who came to this country when quite young. Jardine was born on an Idaho farm which he left for Montana when only 17 to become a dairy helper and to fell timber. He next enrolled at the State agricultural college at Logan, Utah, graduating in 1904. He did graduate work at the University of Illinois.

He was successively assistant in the department of agronomy, instructor, and professor at the Agricultural College of Utah. From 1907 until 1910, he was an assistant cerealist in the Department of Agriculture, in charge of dryland grain investigations. Thence he went to Kansas State Agricultural College and Experiment Station, where he became Director of the latter and Dean of Agriculture in the former, 1913-18, and president of the University March 1, 1918 to March 4, 1925.

Jardine was a member of the President's Agricultural Conference, 1924-1925. He was a member also of a wide variety of commissions and boards, as well as the author of numerous papers and bulletins on dry farming and crop production. He opposed the McNary-Haugen Bill and was firmly against price fixing for agricultural products. His administration was notable for consolidation and unification of the Department and its policies. Between 1930 and 1933, Jardine was our Minister to Egypt. Since that time he has been president of the Municipal University near Wichita, Kans.

Arthur M. Hyde (1877-1947) was appointed Secretary of Agriculture by President Hoover and served from March 5, 1929 until March 4, 1933. He was born in Princeton, Mo., his father having been a former member of the House of Representatives. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1899, and from the Law School of Iowa University in 1900, whereupon he settled in his home town to practice law and later served as its mayor.



Mr. Hyde was always active in political and religious circles. He attained no little fame as an orator and debator and was master of the salty phrase. He operated several farms, engaged in the automobile business and, in 1927, became president of the Sentinel Life Insurance Co. of Kansas City, Mo. He was a follower of Theodore Roosevelt in the Bull Moose movement. He served as Republican Governor of Missouri 1921-25, carrying on vigorous road-improvement and educational-betterment programs. He opposed the "equalization fee" feature of the McNary-Haugen Bill in President Coolidge's Administration.

As Secretary of Agriculture he announced he would make few political appointments, and he kept his word. His special interests were road improvement, cooperative marketing, and the wider dissemination of technical information among farmers. On his retirement he entered the practice of law in Trenton, Mo. where he had moved in 1915, and where he thereafter maintained his residence. He died in New York City, on October 17, 1947, after undergoing two operations.

Henry A. Wallace (1888--), son of Henry C. and grandson of old "Uncle Henry," was appointed Secretary of Agriculture by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. He took office March 4, 1933 and served until September 4, 1940, when he resigned to campaign for Vice President of the United States. Wallace was a scientist and a statistician as well as a moderately successful editor and businessman who had not only bred excellent varieties of hybrid corn but had also made them pay. He had not, however, become rich, as his interests did not lie in that direction.

Wallace graduated from Iowa State College in 1910, and became an associate editor of Wallace's Farmer of which he became editor when his father left to become Secretary of Agriculture in President Harding's Cabinet. Wallace not only developed fine grades of hybrid corn but also devised a useful and highly statistical series of hog-ratio charts. He always maintained an intimate connection with farm affairs.

As Secretary his name is associated with the development of the so-called "action" agencies. He created practically a new Department of Agriculture to carry research into action. He felt that it was possible for farmers to utilize the Department to build economic democracy in agriculture through their township and county committees. However, the work of the new Department was built squarely upon that of the old.

Wallace sought to make the entire Department, old and new, express itself continuously in terms of action which would best conserve the soil, feed the cities, and build a farm civilization that would forever serve as the foundation of democracy. His basic interests were statistics, breeding experiments, agricultural economics, editing, and writing. He later became Vice President of the United States and thereafter, Secretary of Commerce.

Claude R. Wickard (1893--) was appointed Secretary of Agriculture by President Roosevelt on Wallace's resignation. He took office September 5, 1940, and was the third Secretary to have previously held a subordinate position in the Department. Wickard was born in Indiana and began to help operating the family farm, settled by his great grandfather in 1840, as soon as he was old enough.



He graduated from Purdue University with a degree in animal husbandry. He added acreage to the original family farm and operated it from his graduation in 1915 until he came to Washington, in 1933. Even then he continued to manage the farm from Washington, with occasional visits there. Before coming to Washington, Wickard had been a member of the Indiana State legislature.

In 1933 he was an Indiana delegate to the National Corn-Hog Conference in Des Moines, Iowa; then he became a member of the National Corn-Hog Committee of Twenty-Five which helped set up the original AAA corn-hog program. Soon he was appointed assistant chief of the AAA corn-hog section and, in 1935, its chief. He became Assistant Director of the North Central Division when AAA inaugurated its Agricultural Conservation Program in 1936. On February 1, 1940, Wickard was appointed Under Secretary of Agriculture.

As Secretary, he manifested deep interest in soil building, better crop and livestock production, improved status for low-income farm families, farm organizations, and the promotion of AAA programs by farmer committees. From December 5, 1942, until March 26, 1943, Wickard was also in charge of the Nation's wartime food program.

Executive Orders issued March 26 and April 19, 1943, transferred the Secretary's authority with respect to the food program to a War Food Administrator, also appointed by and responsible to the President. On March 29, 1943, Chester C. Davis took charge as War Food Administrator, serving until his resignation took effect, June 28, 1943. Thereupon Judge Marvin Jones became War Food Administrator and served as head of the War Food Administration until his resignation took effect July 1, 1945. In resigning, Judge Jones suggested the consolidation of the Department of Agriculture and the War Food Administration under a single head. This occurred July 1, 1945, on which date Mr. Wickard became Administrator of the Rural Electrification Administration.

Clinton P. Anderson (1895--) was appointed Secretary of Agriculture by President Truman, to take office July 1, 1945, and to have charge of both the Department of Agriculture and the War Food Administration. He served until May 10, 1948. He regarded himself as primarily a businessman, rather than a farmer, though he owned and operated 800 acres of irrigated land near Albuquerque, N. Mex., and another 640-acre farm near Mitchell, S. Dak. On the former he had, at the time of his appointment, some 125 Holstein cattle, both grade and registered, and he raised alfalfa, oats, barley, and grain sorghum for food. He sold milk on the fluid market.

As to business, Anderson was president of the Mountain States Mutual Casualty Co. which he organized in July 1937, and he also operated a general insurance agency in Albuquerque. He had for years been active in civic clubs and in 1932-33 was president of Rotary International. He was elected to the House of Representatives from New Mexico, one of two members at large, in the 77th, 78th, and 79th Congresses. In the last he was chairman of the Committee to Investigate Food Shortages.



Anderson was born in Centerville, S. Dak., October 23, 1895, the son of a Swedish immigrant. He was educated at Dakota Wesleyan University and at the University of Michigan. Unable to get into World War I because of his health, he got a job on a newspaper in Mitchell, S. Dak. Later he became a reporter on and editor of the Albuquerque, N. Mex., Journal. He gradually recovered his health in the southwest.

He served as State Treasurer of New Mexico, 1933-34; administrator of State relief and field representative of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, 1935-36; chairman and executive director of the New Mexico Unemployment Compensation Commission, 1936-38; and managing director of the Coronado Exposition Commission, 1939-40. He is an enthusiastic collector of books and documents on Franklin D. Roosevelt, on the history of the West, and on wartime budget hearings.

As Secretary he was notable for his administrative, organizing, and speaking abilities. He first reorganized and consolidated his Department and then redirected it to meet the acute world food crisis of the post-war period. From the very beginning of his term he strongly advocated all-out farm production and national recognition of the agricultural industry as fundamental to our progress. He was a consistent and insistent advocate of improved employee welfare, and he praised Department employees unstintedly.

Charles F. Brannan (1903--) became Secretary of Agriculture, June 2, 1948, by appointment of President Truman. He was a career employee of the Department who had served as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture since April 1944, having been appointed to this position by former Secretary Wickard. His predecessor, Secretary Anderson, on his own resignation, warmly recommended him for Secretary, and, in 1947, had persuaded the President to withdraw his name for nomination as a member of the Indian Claims Commission because of Mr. Brannan's indispensability as Assistant Secretary.

Born in the City of Denver, Colo., Mr. Brannan graduated from the University of Denver Law School and thereafter engaged in the private practice of law, specializing in irrigation and mining cases, until he entered public service in 1935, as Assistant Regional Attorney for the Resettlement Administration. Two years later he became Regional Attorney for the Office of the Solicitor, USDA, in Denver and, in 1941, Regional Director of Farm Security Administration for the States of Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana, with headquarters still in the "mile-high" city. For some time he was part owner of a cattle and grain ranch near Eads, Yuma County, Colo.

In 1944, Mr. Brannan was called to Washington to be Assistant Administrator of FSA, but within 2 months was appointed Assistant Secretary. Throughout his career his chief interest has been the development and maximum scientifically justifiable use of such national resources as forests, land, and water. As Assistant Secretary he worked closely on problems of the Forest Service and the protection of grazing land. Since its establishment, January 27, 1948, he had acted as Director of the Office for Food and Feed Conservation, USDA.

Mr. Brannan was agricultural adviser to the U. S. Delegation at the San Francisco meeting which organized the United Nations. He is an advisor to the Economic and Social Council of U.N., and was appointed a Delegate to the Ninth International Conference of American States at Bogota. He also served as Vice Chairman of the Commodity Credit Corporation and, as Vice Chairman of the Program and Policy Committee, he presented the Department's long-range agricultural program to Congress.

